India

FOR THE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Viceroy's telegram this week (December 14) announces a rise in the numbers in receipt of famine relief—from 91,000 to 96,000. The expression "elsewhere (than in Madras) there is no change in prospects" is becoming stereotyped. What does this mean? Especially what does it mean to Kathiawar and Gujerat, where the numbers on relief are increasing, even if the increase be "slow"? Last week, at length, "test works were being opened in South Punjab districts"; and this week "test relief works were opened in Hissar, and gratuitous relief started on a small scale in some States of Rajputana and Central India." Why this reluctance and delay? Are we to believe that in point of fact there is no really urgent necessity? We can only say that, in view of all we can learn of the economic conditions, such a belief is extremely difficult to entertain. The "Investors' Review" (November 30), referring to the steady decrease in relief camps, asked: "Have the people died off? What is the death-rate in these Indian camps?" The questions are still most pertinent. And as for the prospects, what can be anticipated on the basis of the recent Viceregal reports? What but more famine, disease, death, and demoralisation? And still not a finger seems to be raised in the way of definitive prevention.

On another page will be found a Note, which Sir William Wedderburn has laid before the Indian Famine Union, upon the Report of the last Indian Famine Commission. The effect of the Note is to show that, excellent as are some of the suggestions of the Commission, there is a deplorable lack of "precise official information" upon matters of vital importance. The Indian Famine Union, therefore, may well find in the conclusions arrived at by Sir Antony MacDonnell and his colleagues reinforcement for their request for detailed village enquiry. And the Famine Union cannot fail to be encouraged by the appreciation which the Famine Commission has shown of the value of non-official agency.

An excellent review of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's magnum opus, "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India," appeared in the "Daily News" of Tuesday last. We may well quote one passage:—

> Mr. Naoroji's labours on behalf of India richly deserve a permanent record, and this volume, which contains a selection of his writings and speeches during the last quarter of a century, is therefore to be heartily welcomed. It is a storehouse of information for students of Indian economics, and it is something more than that. Mr. Naoroji is an unfaltering friend of England, and he shows his friendship by insisting, in season and out of season, on the high professions and the generous promises which this country has extended to India. The England that Mr. Naoroji admires is the country whose sentiments were clothed in noble language in the Proclamation of 1858, the country of disinterested motives, the champion of liberty and justice, the pioneer of a civilisation which was to unlock the gates of a new era for our Indian fellow-subjects. The England he criticises is the country that has insisted on ruling India as a conqueror instead of a trustee, that has reduced her to bitter and ever increasing poverty by piling burdens on her back grievous and heavy to be borne, and drained away her wealth by the methods of the absentee landlord.

That is well said. Short-sighted or interested observers sometimes speak as if the kind of criticism which Mr. Naoroji has so vigorously and so successfully uttered were anti-English. Which is quite curiously the reverse of the truth.

An indication of the annual income of Indians which emerges in an incidental way seems worth noting. At the last half-yearly meeting of the Bengal and North-Western Railway (December 3), Mr. Martin Wood remarked that, while the increase in the passenger traffic was very satisfactory, it "was naturally to be expected, as some of the extensions ran through very thickly populated districts." In reply on this point, the Chairman said

> it was perfectly true that many parts of the country traversed by the Company's lines were densely populated, but the people were intensely poor, the wages of the agricultural labourers being only Rs. 2½ per month.

Now 2½ rupees per month is 30 rupees per year. This is Lord Curzon's average for the whole country. Yet, looking at the conditions above and below the Bengal agricultural labourer, one would not be surprised if the average came out at a considerably lower figure. However, we simply record the Chairman's remark for what it may be worth.

The Berar Famine Report evidently offers some difficulty to those who insist that India, in spite of the drain on her resources caused by the tribute, is increasing in wealth. The circumstances of Berar are no doubt peculiar. With the exception of a scarcity in 1896-97, there had been good seasons for fifty years, yet on the complete failure of the crops in 1899, the distress at once became acute. At one time no less than 20 per cent. of the population were on relief. Although this is somewhat less than in the Central Provinces where the people in 1899 had not fully recovered from the famine of 1896-97, it is higher than the average to which the Famine Commission of 1880 looked forward. It is true that the superiority of Berar was made manifest as soon as the rains commenced; for as it had suffered from only the one famine, it was easier to make a fresh start, and the land revenue demand was easily recovered.

The acute distress, however, somewhat troubles the "Pioneer," lest it might be thought to lend countenance to the grievous heresy that India is growing poorer. It finds the true solution in two facts. First, the population of Berar is chiefly agricultural. Secondly, 34 per cent. of the population consists of landless field labourers, and about the same percentage of petty tenants little better off. The "Pioneer" is very anxious to absolve British rule from the charge of making Berar poorer. It, therefore, accuses our rule of forcing the bulk of the people to depend on agriculture alone, and of making two-thirds of them poorer. The wealth is there, we are assured, but it tends to concentrate in a few hands. The country is not getting poorer, but only the majority of the people. The increasing poverty of the masses is thus a matter of agreement, and the only question in dispute is whether, in spite of the drain, this is counterbalanced by the increasing prosperity of the few.

A correspondent of the "Mahratta" draws attention to the gloomy position of the Bombay mills. He puts his facts into a tabular form. Taking 49 cotton mills, of which 18 are weaving, he shows that in only five has there been a gain. In eight, according to the market value, the whole capital has been lost. Of the remaining 36, in only

one third is the market value half or more than half the nominal value of the original share; and the market value of one of the largest is only just half of the paid up capital, the loss being considerably over a million. With a total market value of under twenty-seven-and-a-half millions for the forty-nine companies, the loss has been over forty millions, and the gain under four millions.

We hear that Mr. Romesh Dutt's new work, "The Economic History of British India" is now in the hands of the publisher. With his long and varied experience as a revenue officer, his intimate acquaintance with the peasantry and the industrial classes of his own country, and his thorough familiarity with the official papers and Blue-books on the subject, Mr. Dutt was well fitted to undertake the task, and he has spent the best part of the last two years in writing the work. It begins with the rise of the British power in India in 1757, and narrates the land-revenue, the commercial, and the financial transactions of the different Provinces of India through successive administrations. The settlements made by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal, by Sir Thomas Munro in Madras, by Robert M. Bird in Northern India, and by Sir George Wingate in Bombay will be fully described, and not the least interesting portion of the work will be the chapters on the industries and manufactures of India. The results of the statistical enquiries made by Dr. Buchanan in the early part of the nineteenth century will be told in two chapters; and the economic condition of the people, as elicited by the Parliamentary enquiries of 1813 and 1833, on the occasions of the renewal of the Company's Charter will also be duly exhibited. The golden age of the Company's rule—the administrations of Munro, Elphinstone, and Bentinck—will be fully set forth; and although the volume about to issue ends with the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, the subsequent economic history of India is briefly narrated so as to make the volume complete, and it ends with an appendix giving statistics for India in 1900. At a time when the economic condition of India ought to receive much attention, Mr. Dutt's work will have much interest and value.

Pity the plight of the poor Civilian! Mr. W. Egerton, I.C.S., writes in the January number of the "Asiatic Quarterly Review" on the Service he adorns, his object being "to correct erroneous existing impressions regarding the Indian Civil Service, and to enable those who think of adopting this profession as their career to form an accurate estimate of the advantages and disadvantages which it holds out for them." The object is praiseworthy, and Mr. Egerton seems to be in a position to accomplish it effectively, being midway in his official career and thus able to look before and after with a tolerably clear notion of how the land lies. We do not think he will discourage competitors, or disillusion them, by his "impartial and unbiassed view of the actual state of affairs." Nobody, we should suppose, nowadays goes in for a Civilian's career on his hopes of shaking profitably the fabulous pagoda-tree; and we should greatly doubt whether "Thackeray's picture of Jos Sedley and Macaulay's essays on Clive and Hastings are responsible for a great deal of the current misapprehension," or Sir George Trevelyan's "Competition-Walla" either. To believe this is to libel the discernment of our aspiring youth. But we agree that "there exists undoubtedly a wide-spread belief that the Indian Civilian is a very highly paid individual, one who may reasonably hope to retire, after a not very prolonged period of service in India, with a considerable fortune." Only instead of "fortune," we should write "pension."

Now it is on this "belief" that Mr. Egerton's contentions substantially turn. There is nothing of the nature of a revelation in anything else he brings forward, one point excepted; and that point is the final lot of the Anglo-Indian when he retires to England, and it is not unconnected with his pecuniary grievance. Mr. Egerton says:—

> Nine hundred odd pounds a year, together with the "damnosa hereditas" of a liver complaint or ingrained malaria, is not an enviable fate. Yet this is all, or nearly all, the Indian civilian has any right to expect at the termination of what may have been a brilliant Indian career.

Well, £950 or thereabouts, after deducting income-tax—which is the amount of pension after 25 years' service (21 of which must have been actually passed in India)—does seem enough to make the average non-Civilian's mouth water. We should like to know of any form of activity at home which furnishes such a comfortable and secure provision for a man little over fifty. To be sure, some men do much better at home, but what proportion of Civilians would do better, and how many men at home do incomparably worse, though quite as good men as your Civilian? Besides, while your Civilian starts on a comfortable salary (is it not £400?), and rises with the calendar on simple good behaviour and avoidance of conspicuous blunders, the successful man at home is plodding hard on a very meagre and probably very precarious income, and is practically nowhere till about the age of a Civilian on retirement. We have no consideration for the heavy expenditure of the Civilian in India: the system is not merely artificial, but preposterous; and, in any case, it is seldom so ruinous as Mr. Egerton represents. Besides, £950 a year on retirement to England ought to salve all social wounds in India. To call it "a straitened income" is absurd; it is to suppose that the retired Civilian is to go on at hake and manger on the Anglo-Indian scale. And if the retired Anglo-Indian magnate cuts a rather less consequential figure in London, he must consider that the supply of the Indian Civil Service scarcely exhausts the fund of ability at home. Mr. Egerton will have to revise his conceptions.

There were some observations in our issue of December 13 (p. 279) on the subject of efforts made by the Political Departments in India to obtain control over the ports in territories of the Indian States having any seaboard accessible to foreign trade. In these notes, contributed by an Anglo-Indian friend of experience in such matters, there occurred this remark: "These insidious encroachments may already have gone further than is generally known." Well, we now find prompt and ominous confirmation of this apprehension in certain "Kathiawar News Notes," appearing in a Bombay weekly journal, describing the more prominent incidents connected with Lord Northcote's tour (his first) in that province of two hundred ancient kingdoms. The writer thus condenses the full passage on the topic in his Excellency's address—"In his long speech the Governor spoke anent the subject of taking over the bunders [ports and landing places], so far as the levy of customs duty thereat is concerned, and he deprecated the unwillingness of the Chiefs to part with their immemorial rights. He, however, expressed sanguine hopes of their agreeing to this [as he phrased it] useful and needful proposal."

On turning to the full report of his lordship's speeches as given in the "Times of India" (overland edition), we find that the passage on this subject is quite as ominous as our Anglo-Indian correspondent could have anticipated. Much of it consists of a plausible and laboured argument on the score of convenience and facility of British revenue collection. Lord Northcote scarcely glanced at the well founded political objection of the Chiefs—including five of the larger Principalities in the province—to this straining of the paramountcy power. This is one of "the things of India" which Lord Northcote has hardly had time, as yet, to realise, though he can readily see through it if he would turn to his excellent father's views regarding the higher side of that great subject, so worthily dealt with by Sir Stafford Northcote in his minutes and despatches which resulted in the memorable rendition of Mysore.

In this instance the still new Bombay Governor is necessarily very much in the hands of his executive advisers. On this tour he was accompanied by his Political Secretary, also by the senior Member of Council, Sir Charles Ollivant, whose forceful presence as former Political Agent for Kathiawar would be felt, as it was, no doubt, intended to be by the Princes concerned. By the way, it is satisfactory to find that those Chiefs have, so far, had firmness enough to maintain their hereditary sovereign responsibilities. Another observation suggests itself—had the Bombay Council not been left so long without a Judicial Member this ill-judged political scheme might have been averted.

There is scarcely a syllable this week about the Mahsud Waziri, notwithstanding all the pother of the week before. The last "Times" telegram on the subject, which came from Calcutta, reported (December 12) "a strict severe blockade with occasional raids against the tribesmen." This is, or ought to be, nothing new. The blockade is ancient history, and, given a blockade at all, it is not easy to see why it should be anything but "strict" and "severe." We should be glad to have done with raids against the tribesmen, occasional or otherwise; for there is always great risk of losing men, and we have seen how the loss of a dozen men raises the cry of "prestige" in danger and the demand for a punitive expedition. Besides, such raids do us no good, and the Mahsuds but little harm, while they inevitably stir up bad blood. In a word, they are purely mischievous, and full of danger both at present and in the future. Yet this policy of "strict severe blockade with occasional raids" does appear to be something new, for the "Times" Calcutta correspondent tells us that "it seems highly probable that it will render an expedition quite unnecessary." One really had extreme difficulty in understanding the proceedings of our frontier officers. The true explanation no doubt lies in this: "it is understood that the Viceroy is anxious to avoid such an extremity." At all events, the present affair shows very clearly how important is the personal attitude of the Viceroy in these "crises." If an expedition does not suit him, then apparently there is no difficulty in getting along without one. Those who exclaim against the aggression and turbulence of the tribesmen—those "scarcely human bandits"—will do well to keep this point in mind.

The "Times of India" admits that as planters of trees on the Indian roadsides we have not reached the standard of those that went before us. The Englishman does not travel afoot, and so the planting of trees along the highways does not seem to him the same sacred duty as it did to those whose only means of travel was by road. It is now "a minor detail" of road-making, and as such "becomes one of the multifarious duties of the executive engineer of the district," who is seldom a botanist or even a gardener. Hence both on roadsides and in cities we find trees placed too close together, and vacant spaces where they might grow well. Nor is it always the most suitable trees that are chosen. Even yet "many of the old trunk roads of Southern India are continuous avenues of noble trees," a living monument of the worthy men of old.

Mr. J. M. Maclean's "Recollections of Westminster and India" (Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes. Price 5s.), with portrait, will be interesting to his many friends and admirers in India as well as in England. Substantially, the book has already appeared as articles in the "Manchester Guardian," but these have undergone revision and addition. One cannot but regret that Mr. Maclean has been content with such slight treatment of his materials. There is no chapter in the volume that would not have been greatly improved by more fulness of matter; and, in particular, the Indian portion cannot be regarded as doing justice to Mr. Maclean's wide acquaintance and vigorous activity. One constantly feels that the author is looking at persons and things from his own point of view, and taking too little account of the view of the reader or third party. Mr. Maclean's experience of journalism and of the world might have been expected to save him from this error. However, what he gives is good of its kind, and it possesses a varied interest. There are "a number of letters from public men, several of which, and notably those of Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Bartle Frere, are of real historical importance."

"My personal relations with leading Natives," says Mr. Maclean, speaking of the years he lived and worked in Bombay, "were always of a pleasant character, and I made many friends among them." But he gives no details. He knew men like Sir James Outram, Lord Napier, Sir Hugh Rose (Lord Strathnairn), and Colonel Baird Smith; but Sir Bartle Frere is the only notable person that he really makes any substantial remarks about. His own work, municipal as well as journalistic, is but sketched; surely it was important enough for fuller description, without risks of vanity—for "I always was a man of business, and took a leading part in the discussion and administration of public affairs in every community with which I was associated." For example: "It will be acknowledged by all residents in Western India that I organised in Bombay a public opinion such as existed nowhere else in India, and to which the Government itself was compelled to bow." And Sir George Birdwood has declared Mr. Maclean "the ablest publicist we ever had in India"—a strong thing to say when one remembers Meredith Townsend, Robert Knight, and Martin Wood. It is tantalising not to be furnished with the supporting facts in some reasonably full detail. The following sentences indicate Mr. Maclean's attitude on main Indian questions:—

> Observers who look below the surface are well aware that India was never more profoundly disaffected to British rule than she is at the present moment, that she was never governed with less regard for the wishes and interests of the subject races, and that it is only the hopelessness of resistance which prevents the outbreak of formidable popular insurrections.
>
> The old good feeling between conqueror and conquered, which thirty years ago seemed to be of constant and rapid growth, has now died out, and the gulf between European and Native is more firmly fixed than ever.
>
> [There exists] a sentiment of despair caused by the apathy with which the House of Commons has treated Indian questions.
>
> The original intention of the Government was not to confine this futile and silly legislation [countervailing duties on sugar] to India, but to extend it to the whole Empire.
>
> What the rayat really fears is the pitiless regularity of the demand made by the State for a rent which is so heavy that it leaves him no margin for saving in good years.
>
> The intermeddling of the Government of India with the currency of that country has done the greatest possible mischief and made the helplessness of the rayat worse than ever.

If there are some less clear-sighted conclusions, they are scarcely worth balancing against these weighty words of condemnation.

Successful as Mr. Maclean was in Bombay, he "pined for the broader and freer public life of England, and longed to measure himself against more formidable foes than he had encountered in the East." Though he had only contempt for the warlike policy of Lord Lytton, he "was filled with admiration for the Imperial designs of Lord Beaconsfield, and the determination with which he upheld them before the world." So he came home and cast in his lot with the Disraelites. He has learned something since then. In order to achieve success, he should have cast overboard his independence and his intelligence. But he did not—a fatal neglect! Mr. Maclean, wishing on public grounds "to overthrow the dual control of Salisbury and Northcote," which "was a source of divided councils and weakness in action," lent support to Lord Randolph Churchill; but then he "had never contemplated the supersession of Lord Salisbury as leader of the party," and so he had to put a spoke in Lord Randolph's wheel on the National Union Council. Mr. Maclean could not help ruffling Tory feelings in many a debate; he could not help running counter to ignorant and selfish demands among his constituents; he even complains bitterly of "the treacherous action of the leaders of the Unionist party in London"; and eventually he was driven to sever his connexion with the Carlton Club, "of which I had been a member for 20 years, and to which I was endeared by long association and by many warm friendships." The results are not surprising. Mr. Maclean will do better in a freer atmosphere.

Remittances on India for 60 lakhs were on Wednesday offered for tender by the India Council and applications amounting to Rs.14,73,10,000 were received at prices ranging from 1s. 3d. and 31-32nds to 1s. 4d. and 1-32nd. The following amounts were allotted—viz., in bills, Rs.34,04,000 on Calcutta at an average of 1s. 3.98d., Rs.8,21,000 on Bombay at an average of 1s. 3.969d., and Rs.3,75,000 on Madras at an average of 1s. 3.972d.; and in telegraphic transfers seven lakhs on Calcutta and seven lakhs on Bombay at an average of 1s. 4.031d. Tenders for bills at 1s. 3d. and 31-32nds will receive about 2 per cent. and above in full and for transfers at 1s. 4d. and 1-32nd. in full. Later the Council sold one lakh of bills on Calcutta at 1s. 4d. and 1-32nd. Last week remittances for Rs.60,80,000 were disposed of and produced £404,577, making the total sold from April 1 to Tuesday night Rs.15,39,31,134, producing £10,230,228. Next week 60 lakhs will again be offered.

THE COMING CONGRESS.

WITHIN a few days of the end of the present month the Seventeenth Session of the Indian National Congress will be held in Calcutta. This will be the fourth meeting of the Congress in the capital of India, where it met in the year 1886 for its second Session. A movement which has thus been in existence since the year 1885 must have already lost the factitious aid of novelty; the limits of its range and its power must have become to a great extent defined; it can no longer give rise to extravagant hopes or extravagant fears; and it must submit to be judged not by its promises only but by its performance. The moment, therefore, seems a suitable one to ask what are its aims and its character, what it stands for, and what it has done. To some extent it has outlived the senseless vituperation with which its advent was greeted; but if it has no longer to struggle against open and unmeasured denunciation—if its detractors now find it wiser to treat it with a pretended contempt—it can, on the other hand, no longer count upon the enthusiasm among its supporters which that denunciation of necessity aroused. Friend and foe alike are more inclined to turn on it the cold eye of reason, and to ask it to justify its existence. Let us see how far it can do so.

Four questions, which naturally fall into two pairs, may be asked as a test. First, have its counsels been the counsels of political wisdom? Has the course of events justified its forecast? Did the Congress warn the Government and people of India against those courses which have led to disaster; and did it, as seen by the light of sixteen years' experience, advocate those measures in which lay the way of safety? Secondly, how far has it succeeded in impressing the policy it advocated on those who alone have the power to carry it out? On the answer to these two questions must depend our opinion of its immediate success, and our confidence in its future guidance. But beyond its views on policy and its power to get those views listened to and accepted, there is the more permanent effect of the existence of the Congress itself, as a representative body speaking in the name of all Indians and symbolic of Indian unity. And hence arise our third and fourth questions. How far is the Congress representative of all classes, races and creeds, and how far has it succeeded in bringing home to the Indian people the essential unity of India, a unity based on common sufferings, common interests, and common needs, and strengthened by every endeavour and every sacrifice to promote the common good of that afflicted country?

To begin then with the first of these questions, let us consider as a starting point the conclusions at which the first Congress arrived. Four points stand out in its programme—a reform of the Legislative Councils, so as to give them a more representative character, the establishment of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service in England and India, a protest against increased military expenditure, and a condemnation of a policy of annexation and extension of Empire. Now how do these resolutions appear half a generation after they were first passed? The Legislative Councils have been long reformed, and, though the full demands of the Congress have not been met, a representative element has been introduced. The claim for simultaneous examinations has been endorsed by the British House of Commons, though it has not yet been yielded by the Government, and its folly, if it be foolish, must be shared with the Congress by the august mother of Parliaments. As for the fear of increased military expenditure for extension of territory and generally of adventures beyond the frontier, is it not now almost universal in India? Is it not admitted by all the wisest heads in the Administration that the finances of India cannot bear the cost of any more trans-frontier campaigns or of any new military expenditure? Has not the Viceroy himself become a convert in this respect to the views of the Congress? They seemed to speak to the unheeding winds. They could not save Burma. But when the scene of war shifted to the lands beyond the North-West frontier then was the wisdom of their policy made manifest. The course of events has been their full justification.

The demand of the Congress for a reform of the Legislative Councils has been most unfairly used to charge them with a desire to place the whole government of India on an elective basis. The leaders of the Congress are said to take their stand on the principle of election, if not of universal suffrage. But two resolutions of the first Congress sufficiently refute the calumny; for there can be no methods of appointment to office so opposite and mutually exclusive as election and competitive examination. Herein the Congress has demanded nothing which is not in principle a part of the present constitution in India, in which there are Legislative Councils with a representative element and a Civil Service recruited by competitive examination while the great offices are filled by selection—a choice in theory at least guided by merit. These supposed apostles of election did not even demand that a majority of the Legislative Councillors should be elected; their utmost hopes did not soar beyond one-half. Are they to be blamed because they wished the representation to be more true, the competition more fair, and the choice by merit less restricted?

It is impossible here to go through the leading resolutions of subsequent Congresses with the same minuteness. It must suffice to touch on one or two points. In the second Congress attention was drawn to the "increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population," and though the official world still denies that India as a whole is becoming poorer, it is no longer denied that the position of large classes has deteriorated. In the third Congress the Government was asked to elaborate a system of technical education. This was in 1887, long before those who now almost claim this question as their own had begun to mention it. The need of technical education has been urged over and over again by the Congress, and yet with uncommon effrontery those who profess to be specially anxious for this reform blame the Congress for neglecting it.

There still remains the question, Is the Congress really representative of all Indians, and is it a sign of Indian unity? That it is chiefly or entirely recruited from the educated classes is a defect—if defect it be—which the Congress shares with most Councils and Parliaments. Even in England representatives of the workers in the House of Commons are only a handful, and so diffused is education that these men cannot be classed as uneducated. The strong ties of religion and of caste in India, if they impose some restraints on the rise of a broad patriotism, at least unite in bonds of close sympathy the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor. In a peaceful community, the educated are the natural leaders of the illiterate, and it is this natural leadership which the Congress represents and fulfils.

And, however much some of the institutions of India may throw difficulties in the way of this broader patriotism, the Congress itself is a sign that those difficulties can be overcome. The Presidents of the Congress have been drawn from no one race. The Hindus, the Mahometans, the Parsees, and even those Europeans who have passed their working life in India, and have learnt to love the country and the people, have all been represented in the Presidential chair. The resolutions have been confined to the grievances of no one class or creed. Nor must it be forgotten that though the movement has been falsely represented as covertly disloyal and seditious, two ex-Presidents of the Congress sit on the Bench of the High Court of Bombay. Immense efforts have been made to keep the Mahometans aloof. Yet two Mahometans—Mr. Budrudin Tyabji and Mr. R. M. Sayani—have been Presidents. At every Congress there have been numerous Mahometan representatives; not least at the two latest, the Congresses at Lucknow and Lahore. The Indian National Congress is a living proof that Indians can unite in the service of their country.

THE FAMINE COMMISSION AND THE FAMINE UNION.

NOTE ON SIR ANTONY MACDONNELL'S FAMINE REPORT OF 8TH MAY, 1901.

BY SIR W. WEDDERBURN, BART.

By the courtesy of Lord G. Hamilton I have received a copy of Sir A. MacDonnell's Famine Commission Report, which will shortly be published as a Blue-book; and it seems desirable to consider the exact bearing of this important document upon the objects of the Indian Famine Union, viz., the investigation of the economic causes of Indian famines, and the promotion of all possible means of prevention.

2. It is true that the mandate to the Commission refers specifically only to the administration of Famine Relief, which the Union has declared to be outside the scope of its enquiry. But the Government of India, in their instruction, have permitted the Commission to record any recommendations or opinions, which may be of use "in the anticipation" of future famines; and Sir A. MacDonnell has availed himself of this permission to recommend various protective and preventive measures, coming directly within the purview of the Union. The Government of India, in their Resolution of 26th August last, welcome these recommendations, "in the expectation that they will lead to a number of most beneficial reforms," and promise to consider them in detail. It appears therefore that the time is most opportune for the Union to examine the protective and preventive measures indicated, and to give its support to those reforms which seem best calculated to avert future famines.

3. I will briefly state the nature of the measures recommended "in anticipation"; but before doing so I may note that the key to all of them is the necessity of increasing the cultivator's powers of resistance. As the Commissioners put it (para. 325), "Nothing can be more useful in anticipation of famine than improvements in the material condition of the cultivators, whereby they may be enabled to withstand the pressure of hard times." The soundness of this conclusion is evident when we bear in mind the great central fact that recent famines have not been famines of food, but of means. As pointed out by the Commissioners (para. 222) there has never been a dearth of food in any famine-stricken tract. The difficulty arises solely from inability to purchase, owing to the poverty and indebtedness of the cultivator. "In good years (para. 340) he has nothing to hope for except a bare subsistence; in bad years, like last year, he falls back on public charity." The main object therefore of preventive measures must be to relieve the agricultural classes from excessive indebtedness, and to increase their resources.

4. The recommendations above referred to will be found in Part iii of the Report, entitled "Protective." They are grouped under the following heads:—

(1) Suspensions and remissions of revenue and rent;
(2) Agricultural banks;
(3) The system of granting "takavi" loans;
(4) Organic changes in the existing agrarian system of Bombay which has led to undue indebtedness;
(5) The improvement of agriculture.

These points may be taken seriatim:—

5. (1) Suspensions and remissions.—Under this head the Report proposes a far-reaching innovation. Para. 270 runs as follows: "The importance of suspensions and remissions of land revenue as a palliative in times of famine was recognised by the Commissions of 1880 and 1898. In the views expressed by both Commissions on the point we fully concur; but we also desire to go further and to emphasize the value of suspension and remission of revenue as a preventive measure of constant application in adverse years." The Report enforces this recommendation by a reference to the Bombay Deccan, where (to quote the Secretary of State) "the soil is sterile, the climate precarious, a good crop being in some parts obtained only once in three years." In these parts, say the Commissioners, "whether the assessment be moderate or full, we have no doubt that it cannot be collected in short years without forcing the rayats into debt." It is accordingly proposed to make timely suspensions and remissions a part of the ordinary official system, whenever there is a serious failure of crops, although famine may be neither prevailing nor impending. The Report goes on to say, "Considerable advance in this direction has, during the last 20 years, been made in every province, except Bombay; and in Bombay a large proportion of the officers whom we examined are now in favour of a change of policy. But, while there is much agreement as to the general policy which should be pursued in this connexion, practice varies greatly in the different provinces." An abstract follows of the various methods adopted in different parts of India. With regard to this beneficent proposal two important considerations suggest themselves, (a) as regards the financial effect upon the Government, and (b) as to the best methods to be employed in practice. (a.) The proposed relief will undoubtedly benefit the cultivator, and also Government, indirectly, in the long run. But it must be borne in mind that the land revenue is the backbone of Indian finance, and that under a liberal system of remissions the Government must suffer financially, not being recouped, in years of plenty, for revenue remitted in adverse years. What is really wanted is an automatic sliding scale, which will relieve the cultivator in proportion to the crop failure, while securing to the Government a reasonable share of advantage in years of abundance. Such a sliding scale is to be found in the old Hindu system of "Batai," or payment in kind of a fixed share of the gross produce. No doubt in former times certain abuses arose in connexion with this system. But with our improved official machinery those abuses could be checked, while great advantages would accrue both to the cultivator and to Government, besides the solution of the remission problem. On the one hand the cultivator would enjoy the benefits of a permanent settlement, given to him in a form approved by ancient Hindu usage; and he would further be relieved of the necessity of going to the money-lender for cash to pay his assessment; while on the other hand the Government would, in good years, obtain an increase of revenue which would recoup them for the reduced income in years of famine and scarcity, besides being protected from "loss by exchange." (b) As to the best methods of granting suspensions and remissions. It appears that diverse methods have been adopted in different provinces to suit local circumstances, and it would no doubt be a great mistake to enforce uniformity. The best practical means of determining the most convenient methods would be by actual experiment in typical villages in the different provinces, on the lines indicated in our memorial to the Secretary of State. Some years ago, in consultation with experienced advisers, I worked out, and placed before the Government, a scheme of "Batai" for the Bombay Deccan, which would have given contentment to the cultivator, encouragement to land improvements, and an increasing revenue to Government. I would suggest that, among others, this scheme should be put to the test of actual experiment in typical villages of the Deccan, and other parts where such a method seems applicable.

6. (2) Agricultural Banks.—The Commissioners "attach the highest importance" to this question (para. 288): "In the establishment of Mutual Credit Associations lies a large hope for the future of agriculture in India; and from the enquiries we have made there is reason to believe that, if taken up and pressed with patience and energy, such associations may be successfully worked." And in para. 396, "It appears to us that there is in every province, which we have visited, a wide scope for the establishment of such banks. . . . . In some provinces the hope of successful working is better than in others, but everywhere there is justification for an effort." There is no question as to the need for such banks. The problem is, how can they best be established? It will be remembered that in 1892 Mr. Nicholson, of the Madras Civil Service, was placed on special duty for the purpose of enquiring into the subject. He made an exhaustive enquiry, and handed in reports in 1895 and 1896; the purport of these reports being that no general scheme can be devised applicable to the whole of India. His practical recommendations amount to this: In each province find pioneers for the work among Indians of experience and public spirit; get them to establish experimental banks suited to the local needs of the cultivators; and give to these pioneer enterprises all reasonable State support, whether legislative, administrative, or financial. These are the principles which underlie the

celebrated despatch of 31st May, 1884, from the Viceroy in Council to the Secretary of State for India. That despatch, which proposed the establishment of a pioneer bank at Sâswad (Purandhar) in the Bombay Deccan, was sent when Sir Evelyn Baring (now Lord Cromer) was Finance Minister, and it still holds the field as the most complete expression by the Government of India of their views regarding agricultural banks. The suggestions of the present Commission favour the Raiffeisen system, and go somewhat into detail, but they do not necessarily conflict with the experimental method approved by the Government of India, and recommended in Mr. Nicholson's reports.

7. (3) Takavi loans.—With regard to these, the Report says (para. 311), "The policy of the Takavi Acts should not be regarded as productive merely, but also as protective; and it is upon the protective aspects especially that we would insist." And accordingly the Commissioners recommend that the terms on which these Government advances are given should be made simpler, more liberal, and generally more attractive. They state (para. 315) that their enquiries "demonstrate that there is a field for the construction of wells, tanks, and other artificial means of irrigation, to which it would be difficult to assign a limit"; and they suggest that, with a view to the encouragement of well-sinking, an expert staff be appointed, with power to disburse loans on the spot, the cost being recoverable from the landholder only if good water is reached. This seems an excellent suggestion, especially if local skill and experience are fully utilised; and it may be said generally that no more direct and permanent benefit can be conferred on the Indian agriculturists than by helping them to carry out these small irrigation works, which will be under their own control, and the use of which they thoroughly understand.

8. (4) Organic changes in the existing agrarian system in Bombay which has led to undue indebtedness.—To this most important question the Commissioners devote (section VI) special attention, their conclusion being (para. 325) that, as an unhappy effect of the Bombay system, "the cultivators fail to reap the full fruits of their industry, and are kept in a state of indebtedness." The blame is chiefly laid upon the Survey Settlement, for two reasons: (a) because it rigidly enforces the collection of the land tax in cash, and (b) because it recognises the unrestricted right of the cultivators to transfer their holdings: "The rigidity of the revenue system forced them into debt, while the valuable property which they held made it easy to borrow. This is the state of things to-day, and while it remains unaltered, indebtedness in the Bombay Presidency must continue and increase" (vide paras. 331-2). We are thus brought face to face with two vital and complex questions, which have formed the subject of vehement controversy for the last half century, (a) the rigidity of revenue collections, and (b) the alienation of land; and the Commissioners demand very drastic measures of reform to meet this gigantic evil of rural indebtedness, leading to serfdom and transfer of land to the money-lending classes. They are of opinion (para. 335) that the measures of relief taken since 1875 "have done but little substantial good. . . . Indeed there is positively room for holding—and statistics show—that transfers of property, both by sale and mortgage, have become more frequent in districts to which the Relief Acts apply. We therefore think that the time for palliative measures has passed, and that the hour has come for recognising facts as they exist, and for applying those measures which the facts demand, no matter how unwelcome the disillusionment that they may bring." From one point of view this determination to go to the root of the matter, without fear or favour, brings hope. But at the same time the prospect of sudden and comprehensive changes must fill with alarm any one acquainted with the precarious position of Indian cultivators, and the extraordinary difference of local circumstances in different provinces, districts, and even adjacent villages. To apply the measures that the facts demand, is good. But we must be sure that the facts, as accepted by the authorities, are full and accurate; and we have no assurance on this point. For example, as to the present extent of rural indebtedness, a point of primary importance, the Commissioners (para. 334) tell us that "no precise official information" exists; and we see that in making a "probable" estimate they go back to the Commissions of 1876 and 1891, supplemented by recent evidence of a general kind. This want of precise information, and the failure of the measures hitherto adopted, point to the urgent need for the detailed village enquiry asked for in the Indian Famine Union memorial, to be followed by a cautious application of the remedies suited to the varied forms of the disease.

9. (5) Agricultural development.—Under this head, in connexion with protective policy, the Commissioners include (a) Irrigation; (b) Expansion of the Provincial Agricultural Departments; and (c) Improvement in agricultural processes. As regards (a) Irrigation, the Commissioners confirm the conclusions of the Famine Commission of 1898; they consider that railway construction has now "played its part"; and express their cordial approval (para. 351) of "a new departure in famine policy, which would place irrigation works in the place that protective railways have hitherto occupied in the famine insurance programme." This new departure, which is in accordance with the views of the Indian witnesses before the Royal Commission on Indian expenditure, is the more important because the irrigation works pointed to are of the kind which the people themselves can execute and control: "All provinces do not, indeed, present practicable schemes for the construction of great canals; but the possibilities of smaller protective works have in no province been exhausted, while in some provinces they have as yet hardly been examined. For storage tanks, reservoirs and, above all, irrigation wells the scope and the necessity are very great." As regards this recommendation it is gratifying to know that the Government of India have already taken action on the lines indicated, "the practicability of a wide extension of irrigation works being the subject of local enquiry as a preliminary step to a thorough investigation of this question by an expert Commission during the forthcoming cold weather season," vide Government of India Resolution of 26th August last (para. 24). It is satisfactory to know that for this purpose the services have been secured of so competent an officer as Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff. With reference to (b) the Agricultural Departments, the Report suggests that their activity should be directed to "improved agricultural teaching to the better classes; the promotion of Mutual Associations; agricultural research and experiments; enquiries regarding tillage and manure; the investigation of crop diseases and their remedies; the provision of improved seed; the experimental introduction of new staples; the improvement of cattle breeding; the investigation of cattle diseases; and the development of fodder supply." To carry out these useful labours "a stronger expert staff in every province" is recommended. This is probably necessary; but it is to be hoped that in the higher appointments Indians will be employed as far as possible. Foreigners after a time go away, and their experience is lost to the country; also the best class of men will not be drawn to the lower paid appointments unless they see before them a reasonable hope of promotion. As regards (c) Agricultural processes, the Commissioners, agreeing on this point with Sir James Caird, consider that in "the mere practice of cultivation" the Indian cultivator has little to learn. With his skilful manipulation, produced by hereditary aptitude, he gradually brings to the highest perfection every valuable product suited to the varied soil and climate of India: what he principally needs are, protection from undue interference, moderate taxation, and sufficient capital at reasonable rates.

10. The above is a summary of the protective and preventive measures suggested by Sir A. MacDonnell's Commission, as a supplement to their report on Famine Relief. For the most part these suggestions do not go further than indicating the line of useful constructive activity, and this seems to be the view of the position taken by the Government of India, who promise that the recommendations shall be "considered in detail." It appears therefore that Part III ("Protective") of this Report clearly maps out the work before us, and that the labours of the Union will naturally begin where the Commission leaves off; each of the headings furnishing us with definite and practical objects upon which we can concentrate our attention. And in tendering to the authorities our co-operation, we may well be encouraged by the appreciation shown

throughout the Report of the value of non-official assistance. The Commissioners state that all who, in connexion with the famine, have made trial of non-official help under proper conditions, are strongly in favour of employing it; that the political and administrative advantages of such a course are obvious; and that still further use might advantageously have been made of such co-operation. Speaking generally, they say (para. 34), "We advocate, at all stages, the greater use of non-official agency." Among the varied measures recommended in the Report, members of the Union will doubtless recognise projects they have long desired to further; and they will gladly bring their experience into the common stock, sharing the hope of the Government of India that such labours "will lead to a number of most beneficial reforms."

W. Wedderburn.

Indian Famine Union, Palace Chambers,
Westminster, S.W.
12th December, 1901.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

Westminster, Thursday.

Lord Rosebery has spoken, and things remain as they were, except that the prophets are now the commentators. The exception is more apparent than real, for to the task of interpretation our political guides have brought as many tongues as they had formerly applied to the gratuitous folly of prediction. Before the speech was delivered we were assured that the ex-Premier would discover himself as a messenger of peace and a martial enthusiast, as an aggressive opponent of the Government, and a devoted admirer of the whole Ministry, as one of the Milner bodyguard and an ardent anti-Milnerite, and so on through every conceivable variety of mutually destructive positions. Strange to say, the speech is held to have justified each and all of those prophecies. The "Daily Mail" and the "Morning Leader" have both found what they desired in this wonderful deliverance, and if the "Daily News" throws up its hands and the "Standard" rages furiously, the latter is discountenanced by the "Times" and the former by the "Star," both of which—though to different tunes—join in a pæan of praise.

Perhaps the person most deserving of sympathy in the predicament thus indicated is the man who takes his opinions from the newspapers. Imagine that unfortunate personage ploughing an erratic furrow through the leading articles of last Tuesday! "Worthy of Lord Rosebery's high reputation as a patriot and a statesman"; "a curious jumble of partisan venom and vague patriotic sentiment"; "a great speech in which he raised his standard and pledged himself to do all he could to advance it"; "a speech with no elements of greatness in it"; "he has risen to the very height of his opportunity"; "an exhibition of childish levity"; "a comprehensive and statesmanlike survey of the whole political situation"; "a paltry niggling with grave issues"—these are but a few of the engaging and helpful dicta to be gathered at random from as many leading articles. "At last! at last!" exclaims one ecstatic writer, hailing the long sought deliverer. "Let him go back to his lonely furrow or to his cabbage garden," growls another; "There is no place for him in serious politics."

Amid these contradictory voices what is a plain man to do? In the last resort, he might do worse than read the speech itself. He will find it full of inconsistencies and of strong human interest, for it vibrates with emotion qualified by unexpected patches of commonsense and sound feeling. If the speech is to be taken seriously at all, it certainly deserves more careful study than it has yet obtained from some of its critics. People, according to their point of view, have been bewailing or applauding the repudiation of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's "methods of barbarism" speech. Far more significant, surely—and certainly more important in a practical sense—is the repudiation of the absurd proclamation to which Mr. Asquith gave a solemn assent on the eve of the prorogation. The fact is that Lord Rosebery is quite impartial in the distribution of his censures.

Two excellent propositions were laid down by the ex-Premier, and these, as will eventually be found, are certain to prove a corrective to the new-born Roseberian enthusiasm of a section of the Ministerial press. The war extremists hotly resent the suggestion that a general amnesty should be proclaimed, and they are even more enraged at the proposal that the British Government should acknowledge ex-President Kruger and his friends at Hilversum as plenipotentiaries who might treat for peace on behalf of the Boers in the field. After all, the differences between Lord Rosebery and Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman are narrowing down to a small point. They are differences of method and of detail rather than of principle, and if discussed without passion should lead to a closer unity rather than to disruption.

Much uncertainty prevails as to the part that Lord Rosebery means to play in the future of politics. He has appealed, with characteristic vagueness, from Parliament to the nation. An actual Prime Minister might do that, but an ex-Prime Minister is without the power. Lord Rosebery can no more dissolve Parliament and appeal to the nation than can his greengrocer. On the other hand, of course, he may set forth on a platform pilgrimage, and that probably is what he really intends. Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey are trying to convince themselves that they have captured this precious prize for the Liberal Imperialist wing, but their over-hasty jubilation betrays an uneasy spirit. The very vagueness of Lord Rosebery's declaration on the subject evinced the caution of a politician who, as Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman once said, appreciates the advantages of a good sound fence.

A great impression has been caused by the sudden abandonment of the concentration system in South Africa. The change of policy comes not a day too soon. In October the death-rate reached a higher total than even the appalling record of September, and though there was an improvement in November the mortality for that month was still enormous. Credit is due to Mr. Chamberlain for the initiation of a new system, under which the worst of the old camps will be broken up, smaller camps established in healthy situations, the medical and nursing staffs increased, and officers experienced in the organisation of the famine camps in India brought in to supervise the future administration of the unhappy refugee communities.

Lord Milner's acquiescence in these re-arrangements was by no means cheerful. In one of his despatches, in reply to an urgent message from the Colonial Secretary, he had the temerity to deprecate "flurried action" and querulously complained that he was already overworked, and that his preoccupation with the camps was interfering with other business. But Mr. Chamberlain, as usual, has had his way, and though there have since been rumours of a sharp encounter with Mr. Brodrick there is no reason to suppose that Pall Mall will be able to withstand the imperious authority of Downing Street.

While Marconi has been flashing messages by some invisible agency across the turbulent Atlantic, our telegraphic system within this tight little island has become utterly demoralised. There seems to be all the difference in the world between different kinds of wireless telegraphy. The home variety is a dismal thing. In the storms of last week hundreds of telegraph posts were blown down, and miles of telegraph wire torn asunder, with the result that the greater part of the country has been cut off for several days from immediate communication with London. Not for twenty years, it is said, has a storm worked such havoc with the wires. People in England have been communicating with one another through the circuitous and costly medium of the Continental, and even the Transatlantic cables. Vicissitudes of this nature have at least the merit of quickening the public appreciation of the researches of a Marconi.

CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK.

Thursday, December 12.—The annual meetings of the Welsh National Liberal Council were held at Wrexham. A resolution was adopted declaring that the Council adhered to its previous resolutions opposed to the policy which led to the present war, and strongly condemning the Government's policy of farm-burning and concentration camps as being causes of unnecessary suffering and leading to the prolongation of the war. The resolution further declared that a Special Commissioner should be sent to South Africa with a view to securing a safe, honourable, and lasting peace upon the basis of concession at the earliest possible moment

of full rights of citizenship and self-government such as are enjoyed in Canada and Australia.

Mr. Balfour distributed prizes to successful students at the Goldsmiths' Company's Technical Institute, New Cross, and delivered an address in which he said that he was no pessimist about British manufactures, and regarded the notion that the success and prosperity of other nations in manufacturing industry was a subtraction from the wealth of Great Britain as a profound and dangerous fallacy. He looked with perfect serenity upon the general increase of the world's wealth so long as he could be assured that our own industries were properly organized and conducted. He proceeded to insist on the necessity for thoroughness in scientific and technical training.

The War Office issued a report furnished to Lord Kitchener by Major Young, R.F.A., as to the conduct of the Boers to Colonel Benson's wounded at Bakenlaagte. It embodied some shocking instances of cruel and brutal treatment, and concluded with the remark that "there seems no doubt that though the Boer Commandants have the will they no longer have the power to repress outrage and murder on the part of their subordinates."

FRIDAY, December 13.—Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, in a letter to the Secretary of the National Liberal Federation, acknowledging the official communication of the resolutions passed at the Derby meeting, said that he had read the resolutions with great pleasure, and rejoiced to find that so completely representative a body had given public expression by a practically unanimous vote to views on the South African question so sound and so decided. The action of the Committee was also well timed, and Sir Henry added that he believed they had expressed that which would soon be, if it was not already, the prevalent opinion of the country.

Mr. Joshua Rowntree gave a lecture at the Scarborough Liberal Club on the native question in South Africa. The natives, he said, prospered on the land but became demoralised in the towns. The higher up the Kaffir was in the scale of humanity the less he liked mining, and the finest tribes refused underground work. Mr. Rowntree urged that in any settlement made in South Africa forced labour should be prohibited, and independent native protectors of high standing should be provided.

Lord Kitchener gave some further details respecting the capture of the Bethel commando at Trichardsfontein. Besides the prisoners, 17 wagons, 160 rifles, and some 4,000 cattle were captured. The columns which effected the surprise marched 51 miles in 24 hours. The new regulations controlling native labour on the Rand had been published at Johannesburg. The opening of more mines had been sanctioned by Lord Kitchener, and permission had been given for the re-opening of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

SATURDAY, December 14.—A fresh Blue-book on the concentration camps added but another and even more tragic chapter to the already familiar tale. The death-rate in September had reached an almost incredible figure—to be paralleled only in the great historic pestilences. But in October and November it was even higher. In all there were 2,411 deaths in September. In October, with a slightly increased population, there were no less than 3,156. In November, with a further increase of population, the deaths were 2,807. The children, as before, were the greatest sufferers. The rate of mortality revealed was from fifteen to twenty times that of the normal child mortality of a great English town. Altogether 4,904 children perished in the two months. In the six months for which we now have full returns, 13,941 persons have perished out of a population which has varied from 85 to 118 thousand. If there is no improvement during the coming six months, one person in every four will have died in the year.

In a letter dealing with the settlement in South Africa after the war is over Mr. C. J. Rhodes expressed the opinion that the settlement of "our people" on the land was the only means by which an assured and lasting peace could be secured.

Lord Kitchener, in a telegram of Friday night, reported another important capture by General Bruce Hamilton's columns. After a long night march they surprised Piet Viljoen's laager at Witkraanz, 25 miles north-west of Ermelo, on Friday morning, killing 16 and capturing 70 of the enemy. One of Benson's guns was also recaptured, the other having been destroyed. The prisoners included two field-cornets. A column co-operating from the north took six prisoners and 200 cattle. The Secretary for War instructed Lord Kitchener to convey to General Bruce Hamilton the hearty congratulations of the Government for his brilliant achievements.

A Brussels journal asserted that the Austrian delegates to the Sugar Bounties Conference had been instructed to accept nothing less than the complete abolition of the bounties by all countries represented at the conference.

MONDAY, December 16.—The Earl of Rosebery addressed a meeting at Chesterfield. He deprecated the "fuss" that had been made of the meeting in advance, and said there was nothing celestial or inspired about it. He was there simply to speak his mind. He had some advice to give to the Liberal party—a party which had suffered by long exclusion from office, or if not from office, from power. Liberals had got rid of the Irish alliance and its consequences, and they had to gain, or regain, the confidence of the country. Let them "clean their slate," and consider well what they should write upon it in the future. There were Tory Liberals in the Liberal party, and they seemed unable to comprehend that the world was moving. If he were in power his watch-word would be "efficiency"—in the navy, the army, commercial affairs, education, the housing of the poor, and temperance, the efficiency of the legislative and administrative machine was of immense importance. We were in presence of a grave national crisis, to which three causes had contributed—foreign relations, the Ministry, and the war. We were regarded with ill-will and even hatred by the peoples of Europe, a feeling which might overcome the desire of the Governments of Europe to maintain good relations with us. Passing on to the war, he deprecated the pugnacious "oratory" of Mr. Chamberlain, and said that the Government had failed in its duty to demand explanations from Mr. Kruger when it discovered how extensively he was arming after the Jameson Raid. They ought to have been prepared for defence when they saw how the Transvaal was arming. With regard to the snatch dissolution last year, Lord Rosebery said it was a grave breach of political morality, and he demanded, amidst prolonged cheering, that the Government should, as soon as the war was really over, appeal to the country for its verdict upon their promises and their performances. Nothing had struck so deep to the roots of political morality as the election of 1900. Lord Rosebery satirised the remark of the Lord Chancellor that "a sort of warfare" was still going on in South Africa. It was said that there was no alternative Government. In all his life, from all the bitterest foes of Great Britain, he had never heard such disparagement of her as a doctrine like that. "If it be true," he said, "put up the shutters, forswear your Empire, and go to dig in your cabbage garden. A nation that cannot produce an alternative to the present Government is more fit to control allotments than an Empire." Upon the question of the war Lord Rosebery said that while he was anxious it should end, we must pursue it to that end with all the energy and all the resources of which we were capable. He would at the same time listen to any overtures for peace from the exiled Boer Government. After reminding the meeting that the Dutch and the British must live together in South Africa, Lord Rosebery said—"I, for one, declare myself in favour of the largest, promptest, and most liberal amnesty that our security will allow under the present circumstances." As regarded the terms of settlement he would, he said, give civil rights to all Boers who had taken and signed a definite and drastic oath of allegiance. He believed that when the time came for the Boer Government to open itself freely through indirect means to his Majesty's Government, peace would not, or should not, be very remote. Concluding his speech, Lord Rosebery said the object of our policy at home should be to restore the efficiency of Parliament, of our administration, and of our people, and of our foreign policy, to dispel the atmosphere of suspicion and hatred which had grown up around us, and to restore things to the footing on which they were when the Liberal party left office in 1895. What he could do to further that policy he would do.

TUESDAY, December 17.—In a message despatched from Belfast, on the Delagoa Bay Railway, about 150 miles east of Pretoria, Lord Kitchener reported that General French had informed him that Commandant Kritzinger had been captured while attempting to cross the blockhouse line near Hanover Road, a station on the railway between Naauwpoort and De Aar, in Cape Colony. The Boer leader was severely wounded. In an earlier despatch, sent from Pretoria yesterday afternoon, Lord Kitchener reported that a party of Boers from Philippolis had crossed from the Orange River Colony to the south of the Orange River, near Zand Drift. This was probably Kritzinger's party.

WEDNESDAY, December 18.—The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council gave its reasons for refusing leave to appeal in the Marais case, in which complaint was made of the administration of martial law in Cape Colony. Marais and four other Dutch subjects of the British Crown had been arrested at Paarl by the military authorities and removed to a place 300 miles away, where they had since been confined in gaol without trial. They applied to the Supreme Court of Cape Colony to be released, but the Court declined to interfere with the action of the military authorities so long as martial law existed. The Lord Chancellor said no doubt had ever existed that where war actually prevailed, as it did in Cape Colony, the ordinary courts had no jurisdiction over the action of the military authorities.

Mr. Lloyd-George, M.P., visited Birmingham to speak at a meeting in the Town Hall organised by the Birmingham

Liberal Association. There was a remarkable scene. A great crowd assembled outside the hall and sang "Soldiers of the Queen" and other songs. Within the hall there was so much tumult that the speeches could be heard only by the reporters, and the meeting was eventually broken up. The crowd outside the hall attempted to force an entry, but were prevented by the police, of whom about 400 were on duty. There was a baton charge, and a number of men were injured. Birmingham gives us an object-lesson in order while the Lord Chancellor teaches us a lesson in law.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

"MR. HYNDMAN'S INDICTMENT."

To the Editor of "India."

Sir,—I am not at all surprised that Mr. Pennington should be anxious to relieve himself from responsibility for the greatest crime against humanity of which there is any record in the history of the world. But I am bound to say his previous letters and the one which you print from him this week, only serve to show how terribly weak the case of the Government of India must be, when nothing stronger can be brought forward on its behalf than Mr. Pennington is able to adduce.

The only point of any importance whatever which he makes in his present communication is based upon a misprint of the word "all" for the word "of" in my first letter to the "Morning Post," reproduced in your columns. The mistake was obviously corrected by implication in my second letter, replying to Mr. Grenfell Baker, and Mr. Pennington must know that I am just as well aware as he is that private remittances and profits are included in the £30,000,000, which I took as the total amount of the drain from India, without commercial return. To make this, at any rate, quite clear, I may add that, immediately on my first letter appearing, I wrote to the Editor of the "Morning Post," calling his attention to the misprint, or slip of the pen, on which Mr. Pennington, in his desire to shake my indictment, lays so much stress. The amount of the drain from India spent in this country "on Government account alone" has varied from £15,000,000 to £18,000,000 in gold—quite enough for the purposes of my argument, I venture to think.

Mr. Pennington, however, considers that the permanent famine in British territory—for that is what we have now to recognise—is cheaply purchased by the immunity which India now enjoys from the trouble and turmoil under Hindu and Mahometan rule. But, somehow, despite internal dissensions and foreign raids, India, for centuries before our invasion, was a great, populous, and wealthy empire, embracing within its limits many highly-civilised peoples, with great arts, a great literature, great industries and a great agriculture. We have crippled her arts, neglected her literature, destroyed most of her industries, and all but ruined her agriculture. Unquestionably, therefore, were I a native of India, I should much prefer the chances and changes of this mortal life under my own countrymen, to the monotony, squalor, degeneration and hopeless poverty for some 200,000,000 of people engendered by British administration of my fatherland. There was really less of "war and anarchy" in India, prior to our advent, taking period for period, than there was in Europe. And the horrors of British peace are infinitely worse than the horrors of Native war.

But Mr. Pennington tells us that the salt tax does not press the Natives of India, and adds, with a politeness characteristic of the apologists of the India Office, that my arguments on this head "are the merest clap-trap." Evidently, Mr. Pennington has never read the vehement protest by the Government of Madras, more than twenty years ago, against Sir John Strachey's increase of the salt tax in that poverty-stricken province forty per cent., on the ground that the people of Madras could not afford to buy enough salt for their barest needs at the enhanced price. Probably, also, he is not aware that the price of salt, which was only 8½ annas per maund in Madras and Bombay a century ago, is no less than Rs. 2.8 annas to-day. And I am quite confident he did not know, when he penned his remarks on this subject, that Dr. Cornish, after elaborate investigation, OFFICIALLY REPORTED that the poor rayats and labourers of British India cannot buy enough salt at its present high price to keep themselves and their cattle in health! All the same, Mr. Pennington declares, on his own authority, that a duty of 1,000 per cent. "ad valorem," on a necessary of life "does not make the price at all prohibitive"! I have no intention of copying Mr. Pennington's courteous phrases; but I do permit myself to say that it is sad, indeed, that so bad a case as he has taken it upon himself to defend should be made yet worse by such deplorable methods of controversy.

After such an exposure as this, I might fairly leave Mr. Pennington, without further comment, to reflect on his own shortcomings as an advocate. But even at the risk of being wearisome, I will follow him to the end of his letter. I have never stated that famines "are confined to British territory," or that they have been unknown under Native rule. What I have said, and what I now repeat, is that never, in all the long annals of Hindustan, have such continuous and universal famines been known as now desolate the whole of British territory. And I have said further that, even to-day, with all the drawbacks due to an artificially depressed market for their exports, due to the wholesale tumbling out of produce on Government account from British India, the great Native States suffer little from famine as compared with the country around them which we administer; that the people in those States are far better off than our people; and that Mysore, which was ruined and reduced to bankruptcy by our Europeanised management, speedily became prosperous when returned by the late Lord Iddesleigh and the present Lord Salisbury to Native rule. All this I am ready to uphold anywhere, at any time.

Mr. Pennington asks me whether I accept certain statements made by Mr. Rees who, I believe, is a retired Bengal Civil Servant. I regret to have to say that, since 1874, when I first began to write about India, I have had occasion to prove the incorrectness of so many official statistics, issued by the Government of India in its own interest, that I never by any chance attach importance to official figures, unless I know how they have been arrived at, and am able to verify them for myself. But, according to the Government returns themselves, the population of British India during the last decade shows a great falling off from what had been previously stated as its "normal increase." And increase of population is no test of prosperity whatever; as I have already pointed out was proved for all time by the critical case of Ireland from 1801 to 1841. There the population increased enormously, though getting steadily poorer and poorer, until at last the crash came. Yet, as Cobbett truly said, there was, even then, "no famine in Ireland." Nor was there; if the export of food to England to pay interest on mortgages and other encumbrances had been stopped. The case of India is somewhat similar; but it is on an ENORMOUSLY larger scale, and is aggravated by a tremendous drain for Home Charges, outside of all private payments. If, as seems certain from the census, the people have reached such a point of poverty that even propagation has been checked by starvation, then the crash in India, as in Ireland, is not far off. Mr. Rees's figures, however, even if they happened to be correct, would not in the slightest degree vitiate my contentions.

Certainly, I include in the payments made to foreigners in India, of over 1,000 rupees a month, the salaries paid to those serving in the army. Why not? These payments are drawn just as much from the over-taxed starvelings of British India as the amounts paid to civilians. They add to and intensify the weight of that Europeanisation and wholesale foreign domination, the economic effects of which are seen in the "unprecedented" famine which has not yet come to an end. India is being ruined, perhaps for generations, by our terrible economic misrule. We are inflicting misery and starvation upon millions on millions of peaceful, industrious, thrifty and temperate workers, by draining their substance away from them for the benefit of upper and middle-class Englishmen here and in India. I, for one, protest against this infamy, and I long for the day when my countrymen will staunch this frightful bleeding to death, and will demand justice, no matter at what cost to individuals, for the suffering Natives of India for whose welfare we are all now responsible.

One word more. Mr. Pennington says that it is my "métier" "to prove that famines are the direct result of British maladministration." On the scale we now have them they most undoubtedly are. But I do not quite understand what meaning Mr. Pennington attaches to the word "métier." His use of it, however, in this connexion, impels me to say that, while others have been enjoying high salaries and pensions, pumped out of the stomachs of a perishing people, I have worked for seven-and-twenty years to save the Natives of India from ruin, without fee and without reward, often, too, at great personal and pecuniary sacrifice.

Yours faithfully,

H. M. Hyndman.

9, Queen Anne's Gate, St. James's Park, London, S.W.
December 14, 1901.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

TEST RELIEF WORKS OPENED.

The Secretary of State for India has received the following telegram from the Viceroy, dated December 14:—

There has been good rain again in Madras. Elsewhere there is no change in prospects. Test relief works opened in Hissar, and gratuitous relief started on a small scale in some States of Rajputana and Central India; but prices are not generally high in this area, and are below 12 seers

per rupee one State only. The number of people on relief works has increased slowly in Kathiawar and Gujerat. In Deccan relief has been practically closed except in Bijapur. Numbers in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 46,000; Bombay Native States, 19,000; Baroda, 29,000; Mysore, 2,000. Total, 96,000.

The Simla correspondent of the "Standard" writes, under date November 21:—

The position, according to the latest official reports, may be summarised as follows:—In the Punjab no sowings of spring crops have taken place on unirrigated lands on account of want of rain. The ground is baked, and it would be useless attempting anything until rain, which is very badly wanted, has fallen. In the South-West portions of the province crowds of beggars from Bikanir and other neighbouring parts are coming in, and it will shortly be necessary to open test relief works. Prices are going up in the afflicted districts. In the Central Provinces some crops are withering for want of rain, and from the same cause the results of the spring sowings are reported as generally unsatisfactory. In some portions of Rajputana, notably Bikanir, Marwar, and Kherwara, it is reported that agricultural operations are at a standstill. The autumn crops have in many cases turned out badly. In Baroda the crops are generally poor, and prospects gloomy for want of rain. Other provinces report a more or less normal state of affairs; but there appears little doubt that in the large region embraced by a line from Ahmedabad to Delhi, thence to Karnal and Hissar, across Bikanir to the Sind frontier, and so back to Ahmedabad, there will be severe distress during the winter months, and also next summer, until some time after the arrival of the monsoon. The last monsoon was almost everywhere distinctly disappointing. Burma alone and the delta of Bengal showed falls above the average. Every other part of India received less than the normal amount, some districts very much less. But it was in the region of the great Western desert that the monsoon failed most conspicuously, and it is there that the distress will be most marked during the coming months.

AGRICULTURAL BANKS.

THE REPORT OF THE SIMLA COMMITTEE.

FROM THE "STATIST" (Nov. 30).

The report of the Committee which sat at Simla to consider the question of agricultural banks is not altogether satisfactory. The view taken is too academic, and does not show a real grasp of either the condition or the needs of India. The Committee would prefer the title "co-operative credit societies" to that of banks, which is, after all, a matter of very little moment. There is more substance in the recommendation that the efforts of the Government should not be limited to the establishment of purely agricultural institutions. The Committee would prefer co-operative urban societies, limited in liability, which should lend to rural banks as in Italy. But the summary of the report given by the "Times" does not tell us who are to start the rural banks, or of what nature they are to be. Is the Committee speaking of the existing banks in the rural districts, which would practically mean money-lenders? Apparently not. Since the rural banks are to be unlimited in liability it seems to follow that the idea is to start new rural banks. Why, then, should the main object of the urban banks be to provide the rural banks with working capital? Apparently the notion is, as far as we can gather it, that the urban banks should lend to the rural banks, the latter assisting the rural community. Do the Committee then really suppose that the urban communities throughout India are already so fully supplied with banking facilities that the Government should not trouble itself about increasing those facilities? Is it not notorious, on the contrary, that the banking accommodation is exceedingly limited, and that the rates of interest and discount are at times extravagantly high? It seems to us that the object of the Government should be to promote banking both in the rural and in the urban districts for the purpose of supplying both communities without distinction.

Our impression is that the co-operative credit societies recommended by the Committee would be good if they were to be only a kind of complement to the main scheme of banking development. Similar societies have played an important part upon the Continent, notably in Italy and Germany. And gradually it is possible that they might do a great deal to encourage thrift and enterprise in India. But to limit the efforts of the Government to such societies is to lose real count of the needs of India. India wants banking in the full European sense of the word as well as "co-operative credit societies." It wants every kind of aid that can be given to production. And it wants in addition increased skill and better technical instruction. In the meanwhile, however, the question at issue is limited to banking. And it appears to us that the Committee in this case shows the fault which is so conspicuous in almost every act of the Indian Civil Service. It is not practical enough. It has not a grasp of the living, active world. It is too theoretical, and every project shows that it proceeds from the minds of men bound up in "red tape," in writing long reports, and in spinning fine theories. If the Government would ask assistance from practical bankers who know India well and have leisure to advise it, it might arrive at a safe conclusion. But if it will confine itself to the proposals and schemes of its own Civil Service, we fear that India will long remain without a rational and a successful banking system.

THE FIGHTING IN WAZIRISTAN.

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

The "Bradford Observer" writes:—The Viceroy is alleged to have found it necessary to stop by peremptory order the mobilisation of a reserve brigade "which was apparently begun in anticipation of his sanction." This is an announcement that urgently calls for official explanation. The military anticipation of the Viceroy's desire seems to have extended not only to the movement of troops towards Waziristan, but also to the preparation of a siege train. The rapidity with which military events are moving on the frontier is, in view of these assertions, justifiably described as "extraordinary." "Lately," we are further informed, "the Mahsud blockade seemed about to develop into a bigger undertaking." This statement from Lahore fits in exactly with the forecast of events sent from Simla early in November by a correspondent of the "Standard," to whose sensational communication we called attention on Saturday. It was quite evident from that letter that more than a month ago, while the Viceroy was setting out on a prolonged speech-making tour the limits of which were far-distant Burma, the military were looking forward to nothing less than the complete conquest of the Mahsuds, an undertaking lightly estimated to require three months' time and 10,000 men. It would seem that events have already moved no small way towards the realisation of these plans, and this without the sanction of the Viceroy. The news that the moving troops will now have to stand fast pending further orders, and that the Viceroy's intervention "has altered the whole aspect of affairs," is reassuring as far as it goes. But it is much more easy to apply the torch than to extinguish the conflagration. The necessity of having to wage an Indian frontier war with the end of the South African not yet in sight is one from which the nation may well pray to be delivered. Further news as to the actual situation will be awaited not without anxiety. It can only be hoped that the Viceroy will firmly refuse to allow his hand to be forced by the unauthorised acts of subordinates, and that it may still be in his power to avert their worst results.

The "Globe" says:—The Waziris are, numerically speaking, the most powerful tribe on the North-West frontier. But they are much divided among themselves. The main division consists of Darvesh Khels and Mahsuds. The former claim to be the only Waziris, and they speak of the Mahsuds as wild beasts. There is certainly no strong bond of defence between the two, as when, in 1897, an expedition was sent against the Darvesh Khels in the Tochi Valley, the Mahsuds did not move. The Mahsuds are tall, muscular, and courageous. They have a code of honour, though it varies greatly in form from ours. They respect the sanctity of the salt, and are hospitable and truthful; yet, at the same time, treacherous and heinous slayers of men. But it is said they never kill or rob a woman, and they certainly put higher value on human life than any other Pathan. Transport and commissariat arrangements are difficult in Waziristan, and the water is not good, fever and dysentery having always proved even more fatal than the tribesmen's bullets. It may be certain that, if an expedition can be safely avoided, Lord Curzon will not hesitate to avoid it. It was only on November 9 that the new frontier province was inaugurated; and within less than a month it has a first-class frontier problem on its hands. The new administration has many detractors, and any mistake it may make will, we may be sure, be loudly proclaimed.

The "Investor's Review" writes (December 14):—Are we going to have another war with Afghanistan? If not what do we mean by this expedition beyond our frontier against the Mahsuds? Our column, under General Dening, the Viceroy says, "raided against the Eastern Shurkai" in the beginning of this month, "and destroyed two towns and seven villages with, it is believed, heavy loss to the Mahsuds," all in our best Imperial-blessings-of-civilisation-manner. And, "since last report," we have only lost eight Native rank and file killed, and fourteen wounded, so the triumph will be great. But are not the Mahsuds and the Waziris subjects, of a sort, of the Afghan Amír, and was this little war really unavoidable just now, so near the recognised Afghan frontier, and is love of British rule really thus bred among mountaineers? With another famine at hand, famine chronic in India, it might have been thought that even the Simla bureaucrat would have held the military blood spillers in leash at present, especially when our white army in the Peninsula is both attenuated and unrecruitable.

The "Morning Post" (December 12) prints the following letter:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MORNING POST."

Sir,—With reference to your article of the 10th inst. about the Mahsud Waziris, and our apparent failure to maintain satisfactory political dealings with them, allow me to remark that the habits and natures of the Mahsuds themselves are a great bar to a successful policy of "recognising and backing up the Maliks." The Waziri is too independent to own the authority of any Malik, and does not understand why the whole subsidy should not be paid to him as well as to another. The very fact that another man gets the money makes him jealous of him, and more than ever disinclined to do what his more lucky neighbour would wish. Some it might even make readier for mischief, in the hope of the punishment being the withdrawal of the subsidy from the present receiver

—in the hopes of getting it themselves. The Sandeman policy is all right for Baluchis, who are very obedient to their own chieftains, but not for the thieving, murdering, treacherous, and very independent Mahsud. May I also suggest that Lord Curzon had very good reason in stopping the collection of a reserve brigade at Tank, as there are a large number of troops employed on the blockade around the Mahsud country, so that any reinforcements sent there now might excite distrust in the mind of the Amir, or, any way, some unrest in Afghanistan or the borders, without the reinforcements being at all necessary for the present operations. Besides, the garrisons of Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan—not to mention Rawal Pindi—are not so far away after all. The Mahsuds are not such a formidable tribe as regards numbers, arms, and combination, and they are so cordially hated by all their neighbours that really any reinforcement would not seem at all necessary or desirable at present.—Yours, etc.,

Dec. 11. CHURA.

MEDICAL AID FOR INDIAN WOMEN.

MOTHERS' UNION MEMORIAL TO QUEEN VICTORIA.

A meeting was held at the Town Hall, Manchester, on Dec. 6, under the auspices of the Mothers' Union, to consider the proposed establishment of a medical scholarship in India, to be held by a Native Christian woman, as a memorial to Queen Victoria. Mr. W. H. Vaudrey presided in the absence of the Lord Mayor, and there was a very large attendance. The Chairman explained that the Chester and Manchester Diocesan Councils of the Union had undertaken the present scheme. It would cost £1,200, and towards that sum £200 had been provided.

Dr. Marion Hunter, late plague medical officer at Poona, stated that four or five years ago, when the plague was very bad in India, she went out there at the request of the authorities at three days' notice. She was given the care of 200 beds with plague patients, and in less than a month she had 250 beds. They had patients coming in at the rate of 60 a day for some two months, and on the average 30 or 40 a day died. The plague was largely spread owing to the extreme ignorance of the people. They thought the Queen had sent her (Dr. Marion Hunter) out because, being a woman, she would be cleverer at killing them than men, and they generally brought their friends into the hospital with them as a measure of protection. Mothers with the plague would bring in their healthy babies with them, and the babies quickly developed plague and died in a few hours. When measures were taken to confine the babies to healthy wards, the mothers, in order not to be separated from them, would give them opium and smuggle them into the sick wards tied up in bundles, which they would conceal in their beds. They were afraid that unless they kept their babies within sight the English doctors and nurses would do something curious and perhaps wicked to them. Indian women, even if dying, could not be seen by men doctors, and the result was that among women about to become mothers the rate of mortality was very high. They were at the mercy of Native midwives, who were dirtier and more ignorant than Englishwomen could imagine. The cost of training Native women doctors was much less than the cost of training English women doctors, and it was cheaper and better to train them in their own country than to bring them to England. She would, of course, like to see a great many medical English women in India, but the climate was against them, and they found it difficult to learn the language and to respect the customs of the people. English ignorance of and contempt for Indian ways and customs was constantly causing more trouble than anything else. We must fall in with the customs of the country, for in India Native customs were of more consequence than in almost any other country. Englishmen who had won the confidence of the people could do anything with them, but if they frightened them it was impossible to do anything for them or with them. The death-rate in India was heavy because medical aid was not at hand, and when it was obtained it was not efficient. Quacks of every sort lived upon the credulity and ignorance of the people. But she did not think it was right to try to Europeanise the Indians. Our customs did not suit them, and when they had been educated in this country they acquired our superficial virtues and many of our vices, and in India they often developed into drunkards and sluggards. Everybody who knew India must recognise the extreme wisdom of Lord Curzon in encouraging Native Princes to be educated in their own country. She hoped that in future the Native medical women would be educated and trained in India, where every facility was in existence. (Applause.)

Mrs. Bishop, F.R.G.S., endorsed Dr. Marion Hunter's views, and declared that when Indian women came to this country to be medically trained they were petted and spoiled by foolish women and foolish men and returned to India full of foibles and vanity, and totally unfitted for their work.

Dr. John O. Summerhayes, of Quetta, said the development of Zenana missions under Queen Victoria had greatly impressed the women of India, and they were afraid there would now be some change because a woman sovereign had been succeeded by a man, and in India, as in all Mahometan countries, it was the custom for men to despise women as having no souls. Englishwomen had an opportunity to prove to their sisters in India that their welfare was as dear to this country now as when Queen Victoria was alive.

On the proposition of Canon Cremer, seconded by Mr. Gerald Peel, the Lord Mayor, the Chairman, and the speakers were accorded a hearty vote of thanks. It was announced that subscriptions might be sent to the hon. secretary, Mrs. Lomas, Beaufort Lodge, Brooklands.

MR. BALFOUR ON TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

Speaking at New Cross on Thursday, December 12, at the Goldsmiths' Company's Technical and Recreative Institute, Mr. Balfour said:—I am but little qualified to speak by personal investigation or experience of the work of institutions like this; but their is one part of their labours in which I have always felt the deepest sympathy, from a strong sense of its transcendent importance—I mean the teaching which gives a sound and thorough scientific training to those who are engaged in any one of the many pursuits which have a genuine scientific knowledge at their base. I am quite sure that, if we were to gauge the deficiencies of British education as compared, let us say, with German education, they would be found more striking in this branch of education than almost in any other. I am strongly convinced that not only is the necessity of a thorough scientific training great at the present moment, but that the necessity is one which grows with every new discovery. (Hear, hear.) As I have pointed out on previous occasions and to other audiences, there was a time when in reality theoretical scientific knowledge was wholly divorced from manufactures or any form of practical industry. That state of things has long passed away; and now the alliance between the most abstruse scientific investigations and the general manufacturing output of the country is becoming closer and closer. What was yesterday the curiosity of the laboratory will to-morrow be manufactured in the gross and exported from this country, or from other countries, to every quarter of the globe. (Cheers.) And no mere surface knowledge, no mere acquaintance with the methods in fashion at a particular moment, can possibly replace that knowledge of principle which lies at the very root of all these discoveries, and which must be possessed by those who are to attain the greatest success, either as the guides and leaders of manufacturing industry, or as the inventors who are to increase the sum of human happiness and health by the work of their brains. (Cheers.)

THE INDIA OFFICE AND THE G.I.P. RAILWAY.

Those who were present at "Indian Budget night" in the House of Commons last Session will remember (the London correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian" says) a curious encounter between Lord George Hamilton and Mr. J. E. Gordon, the member for Elgin and Nairn. Mr. Gordon, who is a stockbroker and a son of Lord Gordon of Drumcarn, piped a very different tune from the chorus of congratulation which followed the optimistic if not mistaken speech by Lord George Hamilton. Mr. Gordon—who certainly had taken an immense deal of trouble in studying the figures of his case—made a charge which if true would be admitted to disclose an instance of shuffling, bungling, and amateurism which even the War Office could not match. When the Government not long ago bought the Great Indian Peninsula Railway they decided not to pay the shareholders a lump sum, but to pay them annuities. It then became necessary to make a calculation as to rates of interest in order to decide what the annuities should be. Now Mr. Gordon confidently made the astonishing statement that this calculation had been performed all wrong, and that owing to the difficulty of fixing the responsibility on anyone it had been allowed to remain uncorrected. In other words, he said that the receivers of annuities—many widows and poor families among them—were being cheated of a sum of £3,000,000. When Lord George Hamilton was charged with responsibility he said that the Bank of England was responsible for the calculation. But Mr. Gordon, who happened to have applied there, was told that the Bank was not responsible, but the India Office. Lord George took the matter as a personal one. This—if the speaker happens to be regarded as an honest man—is a sure and easy way of capturing sympathy. Lord George adopted that immemorial plan. The reason I recall the scene now is because Mr. Gordon has just revived the whole question in a financial pamphlet, of which I have a copy before me. In his pamphlet he goes even further than in Parliament. He now says that the amount of which the shareholders are deprived is as much as £5,000,000. The terms of the contract, he says, under which the calculation was made have never been scrutinised by the House of Commons. Only "dummy terms" have been offered for investigation. The Bank of England, he says, has not calculated the rate of interest, as it ought to have done, on the whole amount of interest received by holders of Government stock, but on that received by "investors," who are a quite different and a smaller class. Well, surely the question which Mr. Gordon has raised again is capable of a simple answer. The real figures should be placed before the House of Commons, and it should be declared whether the India Office or the Bank of England is technically responsible. After that the body responsible can be invited to defend its arithmetic. Mr. Gordon tells us that for the first time in British finance 17s. in the pound is being paid.

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